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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter presents a brief summary of important matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information as will benefit the trade union movement.

VOL. 3. NO. 26 WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1913. WHOLE NO. 130

WILL ASK DRASTIC MEASURE.

Washington, Sept. 27.—Actuated by the numerous and disastrous railroad wrecks, the Interstate Commerce Commission is reported to be considering recommendations that are far reaching, tending to safeguard the lives of passengers on the railroads of the country. It is understood that the commission will ask Congress for legislation giving it plenary power to ensure the safety of the travelling public. The commission's authority at present is limited to the making of recommendations to the railroads, which may be accepted or rejected as the railroads see fit. The wrecks on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad are chiefly responsible for the commission's determination that further legislation should be enacted. The commission has completed and will make public shortly a report on the Westfield wreck. It is stated that the commission will handle this situation somewhat gently, and in the report will take the first step in the campaign for an extension of the commission's authority in the direction of separate legislation clothing the commission with increased power. One important provision which is contemplated is that of compelling the speed of trains and compelling railroads to install safety devices. The power to regulate the speed of trains and the power to penalize railroads for violation of speed limits will be a long step in the direction of preventing disastrous wrecks. In addition to the determination of the commission that a conference of officials will soon be called of officials in the construction departments of the big railroads and of leaders of steel mills for the purpose of determining steps to be taken to meet defects in rails. Since the growth of speed of fast passenger trains and cars, steel rails have shown a defect which is called transverse fissure and this defect is developed too rapidly for detection because it is developed solely by high wheel pressure. Some process, however, will be sought to be guarded against the exceedingly dangerous defect.

LITTLEFIELD FESSES UP.

Washington, Sept. 27.—Ex-Representative Charles E. Littlefield was one of the last witnesses before the Lobby Committee of the House. He was the Second District of Maine which this gentleman represented in Congress in 1906, when the American Federation of Labor opened its political campaign against textile Congressmen. That the Federation knew well the position of Mr. Littlefield was proven when the ex-legislator admitted that he had accepted the assistance of the National Association of Manufacturers. It will be remembered that Mr. Littlefield resigned as a member of the Committee, presumably because of the opposition he had created against himself, not only by being hostile to every piece of remedial labor legislation, but because of several unfavorable rulings against legislative measures. Mr. Littlefield admitted that he had a strong dislike for Mulhall, but added that the praise for Marshall Cushing, the man whose name was along similar lines in the National Association of Manufacturers as that of Mulhall, Cushing also antagonized the pointers in their eight-hour fight, but was finally deposed of by the N. A. M. for reasons best known by the union busters.

FRISCO PRESSMEN'S STRIKE.

San Francisco, Sept. 27.—Conditions existing in the strike of the Pressmen and Feeders against the offices of the Franklin Printing Pressmen's Association are favorable. The Employers' Association, it is stated, is not now so sure that the Pressmen and Feeders' unions can soon be effectually demolished. The union establishment of Sunset Magazine is doing work formerly done by the offices attached to the union-busting association, and, while the Sunset Magazine is refusing arbitration, it is believed that the end is not far distant, as the increased trade by the transference of work and effectiveness of the strike will surely be the means of bringing about an adjustment of the present difference.

UNION MEN WIN.

Erie, Pa., Sept. 27.—In the recent primary election in this city union men succeeded in getting on the ticket to be voted for in November four candidates who have union cards, out of the total number of candidates selected, eight in number. There are only two candidates who are representative of hostile manufacturers, and they, it is said, will probably fall of election on account of the attitude which they have assumed. As the matter now stands, union men have won a notable victory, and indications are to the effect that the four of them will be elected. This is indeed encouraging, and is indisputable evidence that the organizing campaign, which has been on for over a year, is bringing beneficial results.

FOR EDUCATION.

Washington, Sept. 27.—It is reported that Secretary of the Navy Daniels will extend to every ship in the navy the system of instruction for apprentice seamen in common school study and advanced classes in certain technical branches, which was recently established in the training station at Newport. Secretary asserts that the object in establishing the floating schools was to encourage every enlisted man to choose some branch of trade to follow in the service which would at him for civil life in case he does not re-enlist.

CLOAKMAKERS STRIKE.

San Francisco, Sept. 27.—A strike has been instituted by the Cloakmakers' Union for the purpose of establishing the union shop and the eight-hour day, increased wages and improved conditions. The principal demand is recognition of those wages for the women engaged in this industry, some of whom they been receiving as low as $4 per week.

ORGANIZATION PAYS.

Newport News, Va., Sept. 27.—The local unions attached to the International Molders' Union have organized for about twelve years ago, and at that time the top wages were $3 a day. The minimum wages at that time be $2 a day, and many of the employes are receiving $3.75. No better argument could be advanced in favor of organization.

FREE TEXT-BOOKS.

Sacramento, Cal., Sept. 27.—The State Printer reports that the number of textbooks distributed to school pupils during August was 371,756, making a grand total of 1,135,635 for the first eight months of the year. The State Printer is doing run to its full capacity to meet the demand.

TINNERS ORGANIZE.

Norfolk, Va., Sept. 27.—A local organization of Sheet Metal Workers has been instituted in this city with a good charter list.

JOIN REGULAR ORGANIZATION.

Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 27.—There have been local organizations in the various cities in this State known as the Stationary Engineers. These clubs were independent organizations without any affiliations whatsoever. Some time ago the Cleveland organization decided to enter into a movement for a change of conditions, but found that because of the independent character of the organization very little success was achieved. Efforts were then made to secure affiliation with the Cleveland Federation of Labor. This could not be accomplished until the organization became affiliated with the International Union holding jurisdiction over that particular work. An organizer for the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers took the matter up with the local club, and as a result of his efforts the Cleveland branch of the Ohio Stationary Engineers Club voted unanimously to affiliate with the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers. This action brings into the labor movement of Cleveland 750 additional members. The action of the Cleveland Club will undoubtedly be followed by similar action among the other engineers' clubs of the State, which will result in a creditable extension in the ranks of the Steam Engineers and result in mutual benefit to the International and the former Engineers who were club members.

AN OBJECT LESSON.

Buffalo, Sept. 27.—The Ladies' Tailors Union in this city, under the leadership of effective organization, secured a raise in wages of $1 a week and reduced their hours from forty-four to forty hours per week. As frequently occurs, the members of the organization did not fully appreciate the value of their newly formed organization, the members grew apathetic and neglected their duties, and only recently realized how they could preserve and hold their increased wages and shorter hours. Realizing their employers, learning of the situation, were enabled to lengthen the hours again to fifty-four. Now the former members are exceedingly active in an effort to re-establish the union, having received a salutary lesson. Incidentally, it appears the fact that the employers are always on the job, and that it behooves those who are members of labor organizations to be as assiduous as are the employers.

SHOPMEN GET RAISE.

N. Orleans, La., Sept. 27.—Communication received by the Blacksmiths, Boilermakers, Coppersmiths, and Machinists and officials of the International and Great Northern Railroad Company, state, a number of conferences in this city, came to an agreement on a new wage scale and working conditions. The contract covers the work performed by the crafts mentioned in the repair shops of the company. Full details of the new agreement have not been made public, but it is understood that there is a general increase in wages amounting to 10 cents per hour, making the standard rates pay for mechanics 40 cents per hour. The largest repair shops of the company are located at Palestine, Texas, and the agreement affects a large number of men at that place.

DUBUQUE NEWS.

Dubuque, Iowa, Sept. 27.—The Dubuque Trades and Labor Congress has decided to start an organizing campaign in the near future. The unions comprising the Congress are active in their support of the plan and the American Federation of Labor, International organizations, and the State Federation are to be requested to lend assistance by sending organizers into this city. The Cabinet Makers have reached an agreement with the Brunswick-Balke Company, and the agreement has been secured, the prime feature of which is the establishment of the union shop and the use of the Carpenters' Label.

DEPARTMENT TAKES A HAND.

Washington, Sept. 27.—Secretary of the Department of Labor Wilson has directed the chief clerk of the Bureau of Labor to proceed at once to Denver, Colo., to make his office in that city temporary now on between the coal miners and operators. A strike of large proportions is pending, and either a considerable number of coal miners have already laid down their tools, or will shortly, unless the offer of arbitration, suggested by the State Labor Department of Colorado, yet by individual Labor Department of the government will use its good offices in an effort to secure a settlement.

IN AID OF CLERKS.

Washington, Sept. 27.—Provision for increased pay for postmasters, clerks and for their retirement on a pension of from 40 to 60 per cent of their salaries is contained in a bill introduced in the House by Representative Austin of Tennessee. The age fixed for retirement is sixty-five years. It is provided, however, that a government employe of thirty years may retire at the age of sixty on one-half the average salary of the last five years of his service. The salaries fixed by this bill range from $500 for a postmaster to $4,500 for the higher grade chief clerks. Other clerkships range from $900 to $2,500.

GOVERNMENT BUYS AUTOS.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Postmaster General has just purchased forty-one automobiles to be used in the collection and delivery of mail matter. Twenty of the machines are trucks, designed and constructed especially for the delivery of the mail pouch in large cities. Three of these go to Baltimore, three to Brooklyn, N. Y., two to Buffalo, N. Y., two to Louisville, Ky., two to Minneapolis, Minn., and six to Philadelphia. The purchase of these machines indicates the tendency now prevailing in the postal section of the Postoffice Department.

WANT LABOR TEMPLE.

St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 27.—The Building Trades Council, in a resolution adopted by the Trades and Labor Assembly, has requested the latter organization to co-operate in the movement to secure sufficient funds to erect a labor temple. The Trades and Labor Assembly accordingly in the matter, and the President of the Assembly was authorized to select the members of a committee to act jointly with the Building Trades Council to the end that preliminary arrangements be perfected, with a view of carrying out the Building Trades Council's plan for the erection of a Labor Temple.

COREMAKERS' STRIKE.

Granite City, Ill., Sept. 27.—In an effort to establish shop conditions in the core making department of the Commonwealth Steel Foundry plant the coremakers are on strike. This stoppage came at the end of a three weeks' conference between the foundry officials and a committee representing the coremakers, who sought the adjustment of the differences between the coremakers and the foundry.

LETTER CARRIERS NEXT, MAYBE

San Francisco, Sept. 27.—When the National Association of Letter Carriers met in convention in this city some time ago, Walter Macarthur, representative of the American Federation of Labor, extended a formal invitation to that organization to become affiliated with the Federation of Labor. The president of the association dealt with that subject in his annual report. The committee concurred in the recommendation that a referendum vote be taken by the association upon the question of affiliation. It is to be hoped that the membership of this association will act favorably and become a part of the great organized labor movement. Prior to the passage of the civil service reform bill the officials of the Postoffice Department, through Presidential executive orders and otherwise, prohibited employes of the department from joining organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. A clause in the sundry civil bill which passed Congress, in effect repealed the executive orders and regulations of the Postoffice Department in this regard, restoring to government employes the right to join any association which they saw fit.

A GOOD SETTLEMENT.

Pittsburgh, Pa., Sept. 27.—After many conferences of the committee representing the Building Trades Council League and a committee representing the Building Trades Council, an agreement has been reached with reference to the Hodcarriers and Building Laborers Union. The agreement carries a good deal more than a small measure of material regulations. One of the sections of the agreement provides for the adjustment of any dispute which may arise by the joint committee making the agreement, without the interruption of any cessation of work during the life of the agreement, and further provides that the decision of the joint committee within forty-eight hours after the committee has been called upon to adjust the dispute. This settlement has resulted in a better understanding among the various trades and it is expected that the result achieved will be beneficial to other organizations.

FEDERATIONIST FOR OCTOBER.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Federationist for October contains a large amount of valuable and interesting contributions, under the title of "Every unionist in the country. The leading article is devoted to a review of the situation in the coal mines in West Virginia. Another article is in reference to the wrecks on the New Haven Railroad. Another article, under the caption, "Apostasy of Tom Mann," answers his critics and explains his recent declaration in a manner that shows his lack of conception of the American labor movement. Another article is devoted to "Big Bill" Haywood, given an editorial treatment that will likely displease Brugge. In this issue of the Federationist is also contains a galaxy of articles that are timely, instructive, and educational.

TO PUBLISH MAGAZINE.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Department of Agriculture has announced that it will commence the publishing of a monthly magazine for the benefit of the farmers, the first issue to appear in September. "The information to be disseminated will be of a practical character, with a view to enabling the farmer to determine at a glance the best time for operations, and general conditions are prevailing in his own State, as compared with the conditions prevailing in other sections at large and also important foreign producing areas." It is asserted that this periodical will be known as the Agricultural Outlook and be published in the form of a magazine containing about 100 pages. It will be devoted to the study of the production and condition of crops, but will also instruct the farmer as to the marketing of his wares.

WANTS ARMOR PLANT.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Secretary of the Navy, ever since his induction into office, has been advocating the creation of an armor plate plant to be owned by the government. The position taken by the Secretary is founded upon the fact that the three big armor plants of the country submit identical bids for furnishing battleships to the navy. He claims they show that these companies have at least a gentleman's agreement to get all they can, and even more than enough at times. It is also asserted that the President is favorable to the establishment of a government owned plant, and, further, that Congressional support is being sought for the project. Conferences are to be held in the near future with naval officials for the purpose of discussing the feasibility of the undertaking.

GET ORGANIZATION.

Worcester, Mass., Sept. 27.—The Labor News is authority for the statement that President John Golden of the United Textile Workers, assisted by the Central Labor Union, has been successful in securing an organization of Textile Workers in Ludlow, Mass. As the result of their efforts a new organization has been formed, with membership of 1,200 members. The membership consists of English, Scotch, Polish, and French Textile Workers. A committee was appointed among these workers, but through a misunderstanding the committee failed to place, but the interest shown in the present new organization augurs for its permanency and effectiveness.

"BROKEN RAILS."

New York, Sept. 27.—Railroad men over thirty-eight years of age, who lose their positions because of advancing the cause of "broken rails," according to testimony given before the arbitration board in the brakemen's case, are entitled to a freight conductor on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. Few railroad men over the age of thirty-eight, who lose their positions, can get others or fit themselves for any other job. It would be a kindness to them to know if he would rather receive $4.15 a day on a train with a single engine, or decide that he would go to work with two engines, the conductor replied that he would rather have the $4.15.

COMPARISON IN MEMBERSHIP.

Washington, Sept. 27.—Secretary Morrison's report to the Executive Council, in session in this city, shows that the membership of the Federation for August, 1912, was 1,959,250, while the membership for August, 1913, stood at 2,079,687, showing a net gain of 120,437. The total membership for eleven months ending August 31, 1912, was 2,000,000, and the membership for the eleven months ending August 31, 1913, was 1,986,526, or an average gain of 32,000.

STRIKE ENDED.

Galveston, Sept. 27.—An agreement which ends the Dray Workers' strike here has been reached. This strike affects 1,000 men.

JULY IMMIGRATION

Washington, Sept. 27.—The total number of immigrants landing at the various ports of the United States during July, 1913, was 178,544. Southern Italians still head the procession, 29,729 having landed during July. The next in numerical order are Polish, 21,671. Next came the Hebrews, with 16,445, and then follows Germans, 6,832; Russians, 6,851; Scandinavians, 5,895; Finns, 5,606; Slovaks, 5,606; English, 4,656; Northern Italians, 5,731; Lithuanians, 3,372; Slovaks, 3,465, the balance coming from twenty-eight different countries. According to occupations given, of the total number, 44,113 are farm laborers, with 25,287 designated as laborers, and 14,372 designated as servants. According to trades, there were reported 1,817 Tailors, 1,907 Carpenters and Joiners, 1,905 Shoemakers, 678 Blacksmiths, 949 Dressmakers, 825 Miners, 848 Weavers, 1,060 Bakers, 350 Locksmiths, 250 Machinists, 356 Masons, 113 Printers, while all of the other trades received less than 100 contributions. There were debarred for cause, 2,705, the largest number being debarred as "likely to become a public charge," 1,106. During the month of July emigrant aliens departed from this country to the number of 24,614. The total number of immigrant aliens landing at the ports of the United States during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913, was 1,197,892. During that same period the record for departures by emigrant aliens was 303,194. This leaves a net immigration of 894,698. The States to which the July immigrants were destined and, in part, as follows: New York, 29,571; Pennsylvania, 23,476; Illinois, 12,583; Massachusetts, 8,397; Ohio, 8,065; Michigan, 7,06; New Jersey, 6,816; Connecticut, 4,243, the balance of the immigrants being routed to the rest of the States. During the fiscal year just closed, New York added 330,591 aliens; Pennsylvania, 152,744; Illinois, 107,068; Massachusetts, 141,674; Ohio, 42,047; New Jersey, 84,351, and Michigan, 59,157. During the fiscal year America's population was increased by 244,314 in accordance with the figures. Of this number 122,268 Poles, 105,526 Hebrews, 101,584 Germans, 100,862 English, and 56,356 Russians, the nationalities being arranged in the balance of immigrants.

ATTACKS TOBACCO TRUST.

Washington, Sept. 27.—An independent tobacco buyer of Henderson, Ky., J. R. Jarvis, in testifying before the Tariff Commission, asserted that the Imperial Tobacco Company, the so-called tobacco trust in Kentucky, has inflicted the bitterest persecution upon the tobacco belt, and that not only the growers were at the mercy of the trust, but the warehouses in towns were closed down or burned, apparently or otherwise; that labor had as a crop left the farms, and that five factories were now in operation and been rented by the trust at prices fixed at its pleasure. Jarvis further stated that he had known the prices at which tobacco in the Henderson district would sell for and did sell for less than one-tenth of a pound being sold. "I believe that the price of our tobacco was fixed by the representative of the Imperial Company and of the Italian Government at Richmond, Va., before they began buying in Kentucky. I have never seen the Imperial and the Italian buyers compete for a single pound of tobacco." It was asserted that a semblance only of competition was kept up by the four companies, which, when the American Tobacco Company was "dissolved."

LETS FIRST CONTRACT.

San Francisco, Sept. 27.—The San Francisco Labor Council Hall Association has just let the contract for the excavating for the new labor temple, and work will be commenced at once and prosecuted with all possible speed. It is the hope of those having the work in charge that the building will be ready for occupancy by next fall. The building is to be of spacious proportions, sufficiently so to accommodate all the organized labor trades in the city with meeting halls and other conveniences.

SUSTAINS MECHANICS' LIEN.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia held, in the case of Kanawha Oil Company vs. Weaver, that an oil well drilled on a leased tract of land, the lessee to pay land within the making of sections 2 and 3 of chapter 77 of the code, 1906, and that a lessee who performed services in drilling or casing such a well might acquire a lien on the well and the leasehold therefor.

MUCH ACCOMPLISHED.

Washington, Sept. 27.—A report issued by the United States Bureau of Labor discloses the fact that 128 vessels of various descriptions were turned out by the shipbuilding working force of the last year by American ship yards, or at the rate of five and one-half vessels a day. Of the number, 55 were built on the yards on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, although the Great Lakes yards contributed a small fleet.

CABINET MAKERS WIN.

St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 27.—The Cabinet makers' Union, affiliated to the United States Brewery and Carbonating Workers, in contest with the Schlitz Brewing Company, and the difference has been settled satisfactorily to the Cabinetmakers. The question involved the cabinet shop, and the Cabinetmakers' Union and the Brewery and Brewing Company mentioned will hereafter treat with the employer on a union shop basis.

PRESENTS GET RAISE.

Dallas, Tex., Sept. 27.—The Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union last year secured a new scale of wages, which was to take effect on July 1, 1913, provided it was been raised from $18.25 to $21 and on piece work from 40 cents per thousand to 50 cents per thousand.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU.

Washington, Sept. 27.—The Children's Bureau, under the United States Department of Labor, has just issued a pamphlet given a summary of Federal statistics of children. The matter has been compiled from the reports of the 1910 census, and the compilation was undertaken for the purpose of affording a basis upon which to extend the future work of the bureau. One of the conclusions is to the effect that it is important to study the welfare of children in the smaller cities and in rural communities be looked after. The figures show that "a little more than 1 child in five is living in a city of 100,000 inhabitants or over, and that three in five are living in villages of less than 2,500 inhabitants or in distinctly rural communities. In New England and in the Middle Atlantic, North Central, and the Pacific States the percentage of children living in cities of 100,000 inhabitants or over is far greater, reaching as high as 61.4 per cent in the Middle Atlantic group, in the North Atlantic and South Central States, on the other hand, the percentage falls to either of 19.8 or 20.0 per cent, the highest being 64.8 in the South Atlantic States, but